

Remarks

This Amendment and Response is considered fully responsive to the 06 August 2007 Office Action. Claims 1-27, 30 and 31 were pending in the application. Claims 1-27 and 30 stand rejected in the 06 August 2007 Office Action, and an objection has been made to claim 31. In this Response, claim 1 is amended without prejudice and claims 19 – 29 and 31 are canceled without prejudice. No new matter has been introduced as a result of the amendment to claim 1. Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendments. Claims 1 – 18 and 30 are now pending in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration are requested.

Claims Indicated as Allowable

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indicated allowance of claim 31 if rewritten in independent form. In this response, claim 1 has been amended to include all the limitations of claim 31. As such, claim 31 has been rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim from which it depends and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicant believes claim 1 and its dependent claims are in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102, Scott

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-14, 19-27 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U. S. Patent No. 6,480,898 to Scott et al. (hereinafter “Scott”). Although Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include limitations from claim 31 that the Examiner indicated would be allowable in order to expedite prosecution. Claims 19 – 27 and 30 have been cancelled. As such, claim 1 and its dependent claims are believed to be allowable over the art of record.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103, Scott in view of Fitzgerald

The Examiner has rejected claims 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Scott in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,973,042 to Cary W. Fitzgerald (hereinafter “Fitzgerald”). Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection. Applicant believes claims 15 and 16 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Furthermore, claims 15 and 16 include additional elements that further distinguish them from the art of record.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103, Scott in view of Maruyama

The Examiner has rejected claims 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Scott in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,757,294 to Kiyoshi Maruyama (hereinafter "Maruyama"). Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection. Applicant believes claims 17 and 18 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Furthermore, claims 17 and 18 include additional elements that further distinguish them from the art of record.

Conclusion

Claims 1 – 18 and 30 are currently pending in the application. Applicant has fully responded to each and every objection and rejection in the Office action dated August 6, 2007 and believes that claims 1 – 18 and 30 are in a condition for allowance. Applicants therefore request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

If the Examiner should require any additional information or amendment, please contact the undersigned attorney. If the Examiner believes any issues could be resolved via a telephone interview, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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/Damon A. Rieth/
Damon A. Rieth Reg. No. 52,167
Attorney for Applicant
USPTO Customer No. 69693

HENSLEY KIM & HOLZER, LLC
1660 Lincoln Street, Suite 3050
Denver, Colorado 80264
Tel: 720-377-0709
Fax: 720-377-0777